



TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING March 12, 2013 Minutes

Members Present:

Howard Pizzo, Dennis Fedewa

Members Absent:

Karen Mojica

Staff Members Present:

Richard Watkins, Jen Roberts, and Gary Bozek

Guests Present:

Blair Ballou, Darrell Tennis, and Matthew Hannahs

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 4:12 p.m.

2. Public Comment

N/A

3. Set/Adjust Agenda

Dennis Fedewa moved to approve the agenda as presented. Howard Pizzo supported. All agreed. Motion carried.

4. Safe Routes to School Easement Acquisitions

Richard Watkins stated that this project has been turned over to the Township attorney, and asked Gary Bozek to provide an update to the Committee.

Gary Bozek provided information which included a bit of history with regard to the acquisition of property easements along Canal Road, the property owners involved, the hiring of Township Attorney Gordon VanWeiren to assist with this project, what has transpired since the attorney was brought on board, evaluations that have been done on the properties, possible condemnation, and the current assessed value of these properties.

A discussion followed with regard to the grant timeline, sidewalk positioning on east side of road versus the west side of Canal, and possible future considerations.

5. Resurfacing of Roads Schedule

Matt Hannahs, Eaton County Road Commission, reported on the Elmwood Road resurfacing, which is scheduled to go out for bid in April, work beginning early to mid May, with a couple months for project completion. He also reported that the road would remain open

throughout the project, but there will be a short period of time (a few hours here and there) that there will be no access in or out of Sharp Park, indicating they would work with the Township regarding this timeline.

Richard reported that Marcus Kirkpatrick, Parks, Recreation & Cemeteries Director, was going to work with the Lansing Mall with regards to the use of their parking lot during the times the Elmwood entrance is not accessible.

Blair Ballou provided the Committee with a snapshot of the process for dealing with individuals who are waiting for road resurfacing, along with timelines, who fields complaints and/or inquiries, who is responsible for the roads, funding, and an overview of the road resurfacing scheduling.

Richard provided everyone with the current Township road resurfacing process, which included past practices, road assessments, and priorities.

Dennis Fedewa asked that a discussion be held on the rating system during a future Transportation Committee meeting.

A discussion followed on the need to educate residents on the road resurfacing rating system, road complaint volumes, resident notifications on roads to be resurfaced and delays due to weather.

Matt Hannahs provided an overview of the St. Joe Highway resurfacing, from Marketplace to Broadbent, which will have a May or June letting, with construction beginning either in June or July, and ending towards the end of September. He also provided information on easements, curb and gutters, walkways, and website notification/signage informing residents of pending construction.

Richard brought up the subject of bicycles lanes, requesting bike lanes on Elmwood be added from Sharp Park to Willow Highway, with a discussion following regarding the need for bike lanes connecting the pathways with major streets throughout the Township, and the pros and cons of doing so.

6. “Saginaw Highway Riskiest in Eaton County”

Howard provided statistics, which were published in the newspaper, then requested Blair to explain how the data was collected, which Blair then provided.

A discussion ensued, which included traffic studies, traffic signals, traffic peak times, and traffic warrants.

7. Blair Ballou

a. Snow Removal Schedule

Howard stated that some subdivisions claim they are never first, and asked if there was some type of schedule that could be relayed to residents for snow removal.

Blair indicated that there are a lot of different perspectives on this subject, providing different scenarios which occur. Blair also indicated that his goal is for the roads to be reasonably safe and convenient for public travel, they can't guarantee bare pavement all the time as they just don't have the resources. He also stated that they have employees and contractors they hire to remove snow. There isn't any magic amount of snow that the ECRC go out for; what they are shooting for is reasonably safe conditions. The level of service the ECRC shoot for is to have all the main roads treated by the end of the first day of the end of a storm, which actually works out to be one shift. The ECRC have considerable flexibility in their workforce, and are able to time their response to the storm, so they don't necessarily go out and hit the roads at the first sign of a snowflake, but time their response to clean up in the shortest period of time. The ECRC may start snow removal at 4:00 or 7:30 in the morning, and go home at the end of their normal shift time, which is 3:30 p.m., or they may have this shift out till 8:00 or 9:00 at night. The ECRC have a small second crew that can come in at 4:00 in the afternoon and work as long as the ECRC want them to, until 2:00, 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, so it is possible to have people out 24 hours a day for emergency situations. Blair also added, when an elderly person calls with concerns about needing an ambulance and how it is going to get to them with snow covered roads, he informs them that there are always at least two trucks available to assist in an incident response, be it for the fire and/or police department. He also stated that he is unable to tell them that their road will be cleared by a certain time, as there is no guarantee on when it will quit snowing, or how much snow the Township will get. Blair added that at the end of a storm they try to clean things up, and may spend a couple days after the main roads are done doing the subdivisions streets, and again they don't go into subdivisions because there is a ½ inch of snow or 3 inches of snow, there is no magic number, it has to do with whether it is reasonably safe. There have been some snow storms in the early part of the season that we got ½ inch of snow, then another ½ inch or 2 inches the next day, then another two days and we get another ½ inch and everyone drives on it, packing it down, the pavement is white and a little slippery, but do we really need to go in and plow it? It really won't accomplish very much, so we don't do anything on some of these types of storms. On the other hand, when we have a sustained storm that lasts a day and a half, we try to keep the main road open, and keep doing the main road, but after the subdivisions and dirt roads get 6, 7, or 8 inches of snow on them, then you have folks that can't get home, and emergency vehicles that can't get anywhere, which happens about once every three years, and we have to say we are sorry we can't keep the main roads open and start going to the subdivisions and dirt roads. This happens rarely, but it does happen where we have to flip the priorities, and the subdivision and gravel roads become the priority.

Richard then stated that GM had concerns, as they require just-in-time delivery from their suppliers, and we brought Blair in to explain to GM on how things happen, and they actually changed the way they do some things in that area to help out. GM also learned that there is a lot involved with regard to snow removal, and they now appreciate the fact that this isn't as simple as they thought. The road around their plant is clean, and they had wondered why their suppliers could not get in. After Blair's snow plowing explanation to GM they now understand and appreciate the process.

Richard also stated that it isn't as easy as individuals may think, and he has seen what they go through.

Dennis Fedewa asked Blair if he would do anything different if he had more money. Blair stated that there were a whole bunch of things he would do before committing extra money to snow plowing, but if the extra money was just for snow plowing he felt that in the grand scheme of things it really is just numbers. If you have one guy digging a hole and it takes an hour, and you have four guys digging a hole it takes fifteen minutes. Dennis commented, or one guy digging the hole, and three guys watching. Blair stated, "not in snow plowing".

Richard shared his past experience while in Marshall, which entailed a total of four square miles, versus here in Eaton County where subdivision streets don't get plowed out all that often.

Blair stated that part of the disparities in the level of service is geography too, even in this system Mar Moor Drive for example, because it is so hilly and is a cut through actually gets done with the primary roads, which gets done first. No one in Mar Moor will complain about that, but others notice it. This has been done since before his time, as individuals are unable to get up or down the hills, which in past reports had 3,500 cars cut through a day. Blair then asked Matt what the traffic on the cut through is now. Matt stated that he has not looked at this in a long time.

Howard stated that most people understand the need to keep hilly areas plowed for safety reasons, but when they have trouble getting out of their subdivision due to unplowed roads, that is when they become frustrated.

Blair stated that this has been a challenge in the last few years, as they have reduced their personnel and have made up for that with some improved equipment and some changes in procedures, but it is really a numbers game. Blair also stated that a guy can only be in one spot at a time, and can't be in six spots all at once - the trouble is when you staff up to do a big job, what do you do when there is nothing going on out there, it is hard to get good and dependable employees that will only work when you need them. We do use part-time workers and have had some success this year, and that is also why they use contractors. It would be difficult to provide the same level of service on our system, as possibly in the Village of Dimondale, or Grand Ledge, or the City of Charlotte. All three of which they hire and pay to do portions of our system, because they are right there. He provided the following sample: If there is a road that leads out of the city that has a short distance to a county road, we hire them to do that portion along with their portion, rather than our truck having to go off a road and do two blocks of Beech St. in the City of Charlotte, which is $\frac{3}{4}$ miles long, so they do the whole thing, which we pay them for.

Dennis asked if the ECRC had considered doing that for Delta Township.

Blair stated that he is open to suggestions. Richard indicated that we don't have our own plows. Dennis reiterated the fact that ECRC contracts out for this type of service.

Blair stated that he is willing to explore this, and he wasn't sure if there were areas that would apply in Delta Township. Dennis stated that he isn't asking for that to be the direction we go in, but since it was found beneficial for other communities, if it would hold true for Delta Township under any particular circumstances. He then stated that Blair did not have to answer as he doesn't know, but thought it was something to think about.

b. Trail Plan/Sidewalk Plan/Transportation Plan

Howard provided information on how the Townships focus is to be on trails that are going to connect our neighborhoods with our parks, and trails within those parks. He also discussed the timeline and future vision of the Township with regard to these plans. Howard then asked Blair and his staff to look at our list of projects and make some suggestions to us with regard to these plans.

Blair indicated that the forum for this, from their perspective, is Tri-County, because that is where we go for the funding, and where we agree to pursue funding for different projects.

A discussion with regard to Tri-County, future projects in Delta Township, proposed agreements, a suggested timeline, involvement between the ECRC, the Transportation Committee, and the Township Boards, Dennis Williams' document regarding sidewalks, a taskforce to look at things that could be done for disabled individuals, sidewalk approaches, long term plans along the Waverly Corridor in collaboration with Ingham County, and grant timeframes.

Richard stated that this years Eaton County annual report will be available at the ECRC meeting being held on Monday, March 25th. Blair indicated that he would email a digital copy to Richard for distribution to the Committee members after the ECRC meeting is held.

Blair distributed preliminary planned profile sheets for the St. Joe Highway project to members of the committee, which will be modified slightly.

4. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.